

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment
Public Comment Meeting
Naknek, Alaska - Thursday, June 7, 2012

[00:02:13.10]
Joe Chythlook

My name is Joe Chythlook and I am a BBNC shareholder. A board member and the chairman of the board. BBNC represents about 9,000 shareholders of whom 81% are opposed to the development of the Pebble Mine. I'm also a lifelong Bristol Bay watershed resident and a life long subsistence user and hunter. Fifty years of commercial salmon fishing experience. First I want to thank EPA for doing a BB watershed assessment. BBNC have been dealing with the threat of Pebble Mine for many years. Since the BBNC made its position to oppose the Pebble Mine over in December 2009, many have been advocating for the very same issues that have recently been published as findings in your report. Our traditional knowledge is in total agreement with what many have expressed regarding your findings. BBNC board has always had a salmon first policy. One finding that the salmon are the fundamental foundation of our cultures supports this 100%. One other EPA finding that even if the proposed Pebble Mine worked perfectly, it would destroy as much as 87 miles of salmon streams and 4,000 acres of wetland. And it suggests that there is a 98% of pipeline failure over 25 years putting at least 1/3 of the Lake Iliamna sockeye salmon population at risk. Finally, the failure of a tailings dam could cause a 30% loss of Nushagak king salmon and 10-20% of the Mulchatna king salmon. Potential impacts like these are absolutely unacceptable to me and to the people I represent. This is a risk to our culture, our primary food source and our long term sustainable economy. BBNC will continue to work with you.

[00:05:01.25]
Russell Nelson

My name is Russell Nelson. Thanks for coming to Bristol Bay and conducting this assessment. I'm a director of the BBNC, I've spent six years on the Alaska state board of fisheries, generations of my family and I have subsistence fished, hunted and commercial fished in Bristol Bay. The comment period of July 23 is plenty of time. We haven't started fishing this year and

most of the fisherman will be done before July 23. I think we have a lot of time to take a look at this and make the comments. You are not overreaching. We have three basic things that we need after this assessment is done and we can get to a 404(c) action. First, the tailings should not be deposited into salmon streams. Second toxic materials should not be allowed in salmon streams and I mean no mixing zones. Third, perpetual remediation should not be allowed ever in BB. These mining companies go bankrupt. When they are done they leave the country and it is up to the taxpayers to foot the bill forever and ever. We can't have that here. Please help us ensure that the greatest sockeye salmon run in the world is preserved for future generations. Thank you.

[00:06:28.06]
Bryce Edgmon

Good evening. I too want to thank you for coming out to the area and doing the assessment. I'm going to offer a few comments in general support of the document. My name is Bryce Edgmon. I am a member of the Alaska legislature and I represent a good part of the BB watershed including the BB borough area. First I want to say that the assessment gives this area what I would call a stamp of authenticity in terms of it being a one of a kind resource. Many times, in Juneau, I've encountered a lot of decision makers, a lot of my colleagues in the legislature that might know about the Katmai Park, they might know about the Wood-Tikchik Park or Lake Clark preserve or any particular element but they don't understand the overall significance of the area. Second, I'd like to say that in terms of the diversity of the habitat and the complexity involved and the genetic makeup of the salmon species and how interrelated and interdependent they are on each other, in terms of if you go and do damage to one of the six river systems, you may be doing damage to all six of the river systems. I think that the document will help us understand the cumulative impacts. I would like to talk about the broad picture that this provides because the permitting process as I understand it, and I don't claim to be an expert, really has a singular focus and it involves a lot of different tracks that take place sometimes unrelated to each other. This document is going to help provide that broader picture. I've heard in the media, broader characterizations about this process being rushed, about it being an intrusion on states' rights and about it being a straw man or preemptive action. I don't see it that way at all. I see it as informing the constituents behind me on both sides of the issue. I see it providing more science, more research, and more information on making a decision that is highly complex and beyond most people's understanding. Thank you.

[00:08:54.12]

Peter Andrew

My name is Peter Andrew. Thank you very much for coming to salmon country. I am a BBNC board member and a lifelong commercial fisherman and subsistence user. These special waters that we are talking about today need your protection. They need your protection. Senator Murkowski and Governor Parnell have gone on record saying that they will not trade salmon for minerals. We have gone on record asking them over and over again to please protect our waters to no avail. BBNC, along with BBNA and the 31 villages have passed supporting resolutions asking EPA to take action on 404(c) to protect our waters. On behalf of my cultural background, generations of subsistence use, I urge you take care of our people and our cultural ways of life. We have invited you, we have asked you to come, our region has asked because you are the only people and the only agency that may be able to help us with this. We do not need to trade this resource for a resource that is nonrenewable and will only enrich foreign mining companies. Thank you.

[00:10:44.18]

Moses Kritz

Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Moses Kritz and I am from the traditional village of Togiak. I was born and raised there in Togiak. I cannot stress enough and urge you to help us to protect the waters of our lands. Our people and our elders have always taught us the importance of waters that sustain the living fish and others in our waters. Recently, the doctors have urged whenever we become sick, that we drink a lot of fluids. We have, as I said before, we have always been in our cultural lands and in our regions. I wish I could express myself enough to convince you of the importance of the life giving waters of BB. The three quarters of the economy that sustain us is the subsistence way of life. We are also teaching what we are taught to our children to carry on or pass on what we have learned from our parents and grandparents. When to hunt and fish. When not to hunt and fish. What to expect from season to season. How to survive in different seasons. Our cultural people have taught us very well since we are from the western most part of Bristol Bay, it does not mean that we will not be greatly affected. We have always traded for shared with other villages.

[00:13:20.14]

Bella Hammond

Thank you. The first thing I would like to say is thank you to EPA for their assessment. Listening to the people of BB and other concerned fisherman and subsistence users and as far as I'm concerned I think more enlightenment about the Pebble project will only help smooth the waters for better understanding of what our loss in that salmon area could be. Not just that area, but the ripple effect that in so many ways. I encourage people to take more of an interest and also express more concern about the environment. Many many times over the past few years, I have asked people why you support the Pebble project. The first thing I hear is "well, it will provide jobs," which is true. However, I don't hear enough about concern for the environment and long term effects, or no concern for the environment and this is very very troubling. I want to remind people that EPA is doing what they should do, what they were requested to do, and I can't thank them enough for that.

[00:16:18.26]
Hjalmar Olsen

Good evening. My name is Hjalmar Olson. I belong to the Curyung Tribe and I'm also a BBNC board member. My main concern about the development up there is the spawning grounds. Whenever you touch the spawning grounds, whether it is in the lower 48 or wherever, the salmon got less and less. Why do you suppose that Bristol Bay has the last great wild salmon in the world? We have five river systems and each one of them requires large spawning grounds. Also the caribou and the moose. My family has a cabin about 50 miles west of this proposed development. We have been going up there for many many years trapping and hunting and fishing. If this project is developed, we are going to have one heck of a time keeping the water clean. As a matter of fact it will be polluted and nobody will be fishing. We have a good economy as your numbers indicate. Why would we want to kill a renewable economy for a mine up here that is only going to last for so many years? I want to thank for this assessment. You are the only government agency that listened to the tribes and came out to meet with the people. The rest of them say it's too early, it's too early. We have a room full of fisherman here and they are here early working on their boats. You have to prepare early. That is why many of us have made a decision to oppose this development. Thank you very much.

[00:18:23.25]
Mel Brown

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Mel Brown, commercial fisherman for the last 50 years and I aim to go longer than that. I am a director for BBNC and also a tribal member for the Naknek village. I want to thank you so much that EPA is here and doing the watershed assessment study. This is the area that is the second largest watershed in Alaska and it is the largest fishery in the world that produces the largest amount of salmon. Yet, it is unbelievable that the largest proposed mine is going to attempt to build this huge mine that has the lowest grade ore that possibly will create serious problems for us in the future. We have depended on the food source. The area that is located for the site itself is right smack in the middle of salmon producing habitat. It takes care of the salmon and the cycles of salmon that we depend on as subsistence users, commercially, cultural dependency on this covers this who BB area with the 37 villages that exist here. It is unconscionable to me to even think that this might happen to us here. Not only does this area where the mine is coming in provide a bread basket of animals, all different types of birds and fish that exist there. We are concerned and we are thankful that you are here listening to our concerns and putting them into action.

[00:20:51.16]
Paul Hansen

Hello, my name is Paul Hansen and I am a Naknek tribal elder. Resident of Naknek, Alaska. Thank you for allowing me to testify and welcome to our community. The EPA 404c authorizes to protect or deny discharge of dredge fill material to the waters of the US including wetlands. Using such sites for disposal would have unacceptable adverse impacts on various resources, including fisheries, water and wildlife. As a tribal elder and resident, I want to make it clear that the development of a large scale mine for a sulfide mineral deposit and disposal of tailings into salmon bearing rivers would have an unacceptable impact on the Bristol Bay region and all that it supports. Your agency with authority and responsibility to protect BB now you have the science to prove it. The development of the Pebble prospect would have unacceptable adverse impacts on the BB fisheries and wildlife. Waiting for the state permitting process is the developer's timeline, leaving local residents in limbo with no assurance for our future. Bristol Bay is important and worth protecting because runs have sustained BB native populations for generations and is the most important resource we utilize. Thank you.

[00:22:47.08]
Violet Wilson

Hi I'm Violet Wilson and I live here in Naknek. I am happy you folks are here because I would like my voice to be heard. I totally oppose the Pebble Mine because I have been involved with fishing for 51 years myself. My grandfather started in the 1800's and I have my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren involved in fishing today. Fishing has been very important to me and also subsistence fishing. I lost my first husband when I have five little children. If it wasn't for commercial fishing and subsistence fishing I would have had a very hard time. I am very proud to say that I can stand here tonight and say that I have never drawn a welfare check. I would do anything to try and keep our waters clean, because I feel this is a very touchy situation. The waters are very particular and for any kind of chemical to be used would be disastrous. I am so grateful you are here. This means a lot to me. I would like to see our fishing industry go on, because there a lot of people involved in fishing, a lot more than there would ever be working in the mine. I would like to see this go on for years and years for future generations. Thank you very much.

[00:25:26.02]
Sergie Chukwak

I am an elected official of the BBNC on the board of directors and I'm also a tribal elder. I became a Grandpa on October 1 and I think I qualify for an elder. Thank you for coming. Fishing is our life and our livelihood. It's what we do for healthy communities, healthy lifestyles. Going out and catching the subsistence fish, smoking these. Passing the traditional cultural knowledge on to the younger generations. You hear about how they will make you free, the fish. We have been doing this for 6,000 years and we will want to do it for 6000 more. The short life of a sulfide mine that lasts 50-70 years and maybe a little longer 75 years, but one that activity is done the mine is just going to sit there with all of the chemicals and continue to kill off more of the rivers and streams, and then instead of just 24% of the Nushagak and the Kvichak river contaminated it is going to be 100% and that is going to be death of 37 communities in BB.. Once they are done it's going to be like the gold rush - boom and ghost town. I think that is unacceptable and we need clean water for another 6,000 years. Thank you.

[00:27:42.26]
Anna Hoover

Hello thank you very much for being here. My name is Anna Hoover and my grandmother came from the Aleutian Islands and my family has been fishing BB for a long time. My grandparents,

my aunts, my uncles, my mother, my father, my cousins, we all fish BB in the summers. I am based out of Egegik and someone from Togiak mentioned that there will be a lot of other communities that will be affected. The water is all connected as we all know. I've been in school. I have a double master's degree from the University of Washington and I've been at my thesis for my Native American Art History degree to raise awareness about this mine. Violet might have been one of the beautiful women who spoke earlier. Awareness is really helping. Front page New York Times helps. I launched a T-shirt campaign. I thank you for your research and putting that into a digestible anything that can be distributed is really the key to helping stop the mine. It is obviously a terrible idea. It's been said over and over again. The generations that are coming who can be fed from this resource and this land and it's a beautiful interaction and it's one that we are losing around the world. When we realize that we have lost it we strive to get it back, but it is taking a long time for this beautiful balance between human, animal and subsistence lifestyle to come about and evolve. Thank you.

[00:30:09.05]

Sam Carter

Hello I'm Sam Carter from down in Egegik. This is fishing country here. If we lose our fish. I want to say thank you guys for being here. If we all put our heads together and try to come up with a solution. I am really grateful. Thank you.

[00:30:38.18]

Donne Fleagle

Thank you. My name is Donne Fleagle. I work for Wetaviiq. It is a subsidiary of the Alaska Peninsula Corporation which represents five villages: Kokhanok, Newhalen, Ugashik, Port Heiden and Newhalen. I work as the project director. My role is to inform APC shareholders about the EPA BB watershed assessment. It has nothing to do with the Pebble Mine. We haven't seen any plans and they haven't added their documentation. I do want to tell you what the concerns are from APC and Wetaviiq. In the summertime in Alaska, my second and third quarter visits with the shareholders will be challenging. People are busy. The focus is elsewhere and I would like to request a 120 day extension on behalf of the APC and Wetaviiq. Thank you very much.

[00:31:52.03]

Lloyd Montgomery

Hi, I am Lloyd Montgomery. I just made my 48th year transfer from Prince William Sound. I am an elder for the Chugak Native Corporation and the Igiugig? Corporation and I made my 48th year transfer from the Copper River to Bristol Bay. I fished here in 1994 for 10 days. The first day I was here I fell absolutely in love with this place. I was hoping that one of these days I would have the opportunity to come back and it was available for me to come back. I fished a lot of coast. I had experience for the last 48 years. The promise that Exxon made that there would be no oil spill. I really appreciate the EPA and their assessment, what they have done on BB. The money that is involved. I would like to thank those who are behind me to witness this because this is what the rest of the world is going to witness. The whole Pebble Mine and the after effects of what will happen with the whole place. I would like to share with you a little bit that I sent to the Pebble Mine website called Journey: This journey has been made generation after generation. How can I go wrong, it's in my DNA? Here I lay my sack my back. There is no rhyme or reason why I'm here. At the same time, I'm in season. Ma and Pa nowhere in sight and I'm scared out of my life. I am left alone on my own every day of my life at this stage of change. My eyes begin to see within this realm. I'm cuddled in the spot with brothers and sisters too many to count. Within this (?) comes a (?). We have no choice. Make no mistake this is our estate. We have no life at that stage. Here we sit under the ice, it's not nice. In the winter all we do is shiver. Soon it will pass. We will be on our way at last. We look at each other. Where are Ma and Pa? With no answer, one by one we begin the trip of water. We be on the other side and that is the end of it. Thank you.

[00:34:19.02]
Norman van Vactor

Good evening. My name is Norman van Vactor I'm the general manager of Leader Creek Fisheries, one of the main fish processors located here in Bristol Bay. We are about three miles down the river bank from here and we have about 440 employees. We have about 100 independent fishing families who fish their permits for us. I've been involved in the BB fishing industry for about 30 years, and I've been tracking concern about the Pebble Mine project for about 9. My parents were born and raised in the Black Hills of South Dakota and some of my early memories of a young man were going back and panning for gold with my Grandfather. This is not South Dakota. This is not Montana, Utah or Nevada. This is BB and it is absolutely incredible. In about two weeks from now, tens of millions of salmon will return to this incredible place and the pristine habitat that rears them. The will first and foremost provide incredible food

and protein for us, to the subsistence users of the region, and from there, they will go on to feed people around the world. Naturally we are concerned about the large scale threats to the fisheries and the quality of habitat that are preempted by the Pebble Mine proposal. Your report makes clear that puts to ink what many of us have known and felt would happen, should this proposed project be allowed to continue. Elsewhere around the world, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent to restore habitat that has been destroyed. Here it is ours to protect, not destroy. The proponents of this project would argue for more time for public comment. These are the same people who for years now have promised timely reports and transparency. But nothing has been farther from the truth or reality. We ask that your agency stay on track and stay focused. Our habitat and our salmon depend on it. It really is about location and magnitude. I must say that under normal circumstances, a lot of industries like our own, we run for cover when we hear EPA is in town. I thank you for being here and for protecting.

[00:36:52.11]
Tiel Smith

Thank you very much, my name is Tiel Smith. I was born and raised in SW AK here in Dillingham. I now work for BBNC as the VP of lands and regional operations. I am a lifelong fisherman here in BB, and my comments today will not be redundant to the comments already given by our BBNC board members and staff. In fact I will start with my closing statement and then if I get cut off I will be good to go. As the largest private landowner, I support the continued and increased protections to development of the renewable and nonrenewable resources in BB and that being done responsibly. What does BBNC consider responsible? BBNC board and staff have no intention of supporting any large scale development that would impact the pristine nature of the water or impact the renewable resource of the salmon. We have a long history of economic development projects in the region including docks like you see here in Naknek. They play a pivotal role in transportation of goods and services and the like. We support good business and jobs. The entire commercial fisherman who are joining us today, as well as tourism business. We also support conservation easements. We purchased easements that are strategic to salmon habitat. WE also listen to our shareholders including 81% that oppose this project. Thank you very much.

[00:39:12.26]
Frederick Anderson

My name is Fred Anderson and I am a Naknek resident and a fisherman. First of all thank you to EPA for protecting our land, environment and fishery. The natural resources should be a priority over money and jobs. Who needs these jobs? Everyone who needs to work around here is working. Even the TV people who say we need jobs are working. I'd like to see a show of hands to see who needs a job. For the last couple of years I've been doing a study with the BB Times local newspaper. The employment ads. Every day there are 30-50 jobs, some of them starting at \$39,000 dollars. Many of the affected areas like Pebble they can't find people for these jobs. Who are these jobs for? Everyone who is willing to work is working. My main concern, if Pebble is allowed to their baseline research and is doing test drilling, because of the impact of studies like that on natural resources and the environment.

[00:41:10.12]
Kristina Ramirez

My name is Kristina Ramirez and I was born right here in Bristol Bay. My family and I subsistence fish and we have for generations. First I would like to thank you for coming out here and conducting this assessment. What I would like to add, is that even if Pebble could safely build the mine, they would have to build 89 miles of roads over salmon habitat and through them. This is scary to me, because as we are all aware, when manmade structures are built, the wildlife around them suffers. Please use the 404(c) to protect the wildlife, and I ask you please keep to your timeline comment period deadline. The only people who want more time are the state and Pebble and they just want to filibuster. We already know what we need to say and that is we don't need this mine. That is because our people and our culture are worth more than anything that the mine could ever produce. Thank you.

[00:42:11.09]
Richard Russell.

Good evening. I am Richard Russell. I had a 24 year career here with the AKDFG in the BB area. Ten years as a sport fish biologist, the rest of the time as a commercial salmon fish biologist. Very very familiar with the Iliamna area and I am opposed to any large scale industrial development in the Iliamna Lake watershed due to the impacts that are certain to follow on the waters, fish and the wildlife of the drainage; both by the development itself and the associated infrastructure. Particularly roads, landfills, sewage and chemical disposal systems, water reservations, holding ponds, tailing storage etc. Numerous stream crossings of the 70 or so streams that you identified are very problematic. A couple of those streams, one of them in

Knutson River and the other one is Canyon Creek, routinely change their channel. Any kind of structure put across them that carries a slurry or anything else is very likely to be washed out periodically and heavy equipment will have to be in there mucking up the stream as well as replacing whatever was there to begin with. Actually I favor establishing the Lake Iliamna area as a National Fish Reserve as has been suggested due to its international importance as a fisheries resource. I thank you very much for being here.

[00:44:01.04]
George Wilson

Welcome to our community and thank you for coming. My name is George Wilson. My wife and I came here from Detroit in 1979. We were seeking an adventure. To say the least, the change in our environment was remarkable. In those 33 years, we raised our three children here; fishing, hunting, subsistence fishing, gathering berries and making smoked salmon are activities we enjoy. We play on the lakes and rivers of the area. My family has been involved in fishing commercially since 1980. We set net fished on the Naknek Kvichak portion of the district. Our adult children return every summer to help us fish our sites. The business has and is still paying for their college education. Over the years, we have seen the price of salmon rise and fall. We are currently seeing a slow rebound in fish prices. Quality improvement due to handling and refrigeration are improving the marketability of our fish. The marketing is augmented by the fact that our salmon are wild, renewable and pristine. The waters where they regenerate is clear, clean and pristine. The Pebble project, if permitted, represents a huge threat to the rearing waters of two of the largest fish producing drainages left on earth. If sulfuric acid and copper leachate dissolve in surface and ground water, along with other pollutants, are more than likely going to make their way through the earthen dam constructed to hold them back. Ad infinitum is a long time. It won't matter if the salmon get confused as to where their natal stream is. The pollution may not kill the salmon outright. As a matter of fact the salmon may return every year, somewhere. But the perception that these salmon are tainted food sources is all that it will take to drive prices down to a point where the industry will not survive. 15,000 jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars annually are at stake. My job is at stake. A way of life is at stake. The largest reason the community is here is at stake. The quality of the water is at stake. It is not worth the risk.

[00:46:23.24] (microphone echo)
Iso Montlavan

Greetings. As an independent scholar, studying biodiversity and ecosystems, I find the EPA assessment to be technically sound and sufficient for general public discussion, and a work in progress to be reviewed in the scientific community. Here is testimony I prepared and I call it "In Defense of Food Security." As a cannery worker of 8 seasons and an active worker in the environmental science field, and a master's student in natural resources and environmental science, I speak in defense of this bastion of nature and man and the subsistence that we need to survive. I am from the two continents on either side of the Pacific Ocean. As a dual citizen of the United States and the Philippine Islands, I have a great opportunity to live and work with the Yup'ik society of Alaska and the ? people of the ?also. I see how these hunter gatherers of the cold far north have a great disadvantage compared to hunter gatherers who live around the equator. Being one of thousands of cannery workers who follow a migratory life of salmon that come back season after season so we can make a living and survive on the bounty from the great almighty. The seasonal industry offers a way for hunters and gathers and commercial fishers to bring salmon to homes, schools and tables around the globe. This is subsistence life in the global level. The fight for Bristol Bay is a fight between two great professions, metals of gold and copper on one hand and the basics of life; pure air, pure water and food for generations to come. As the last the last remaining salmon of the season are canned, the subsistence ways of hunting, berry picking and trapping get underway to prepare for the long days of winter. This is survival. The Yup'iks of SW Alaska do not have alternatives of buying and raising livestock as a way to survive. Here lies the difference. For my last remaining seconds, allow me to echo a common cry of indigenous people from around the globe. Taken from a piece written by a tribal leader from across the ocean. (Statement read - inaudible).

[00:49:13.08]
Andria Agli

My name is Andria Agli and I am a granddaughter of the Olympic and (?) lineages. Families who have fished these waters for salmon for many lifetimes. I grew up in the village of S. Naknek just across the river. I am a lifelong subsistence fisherman and also a commercial fisherman. Utilizing traditional knowledge that has been passed down from my grandmother and my mother over the years. Salmon and the salmon way of life have always been the foundation of our generations. Nothing compares to the excitement and the taste of that first king salmon in June or the boiled fish head and the eggs that come from that salmon. I've travelled many places in my life and experienced many cultures. This has allowed me to truly

appreciate what we have here at home. While I live and work in Anchorage during the winter months, this area is still my home. We are blessed to be able to nurture our bodies and our souls with our salmon resource and I would like to thank EPA for coming out to the region to hear from the people who are affected most. The detailed science in the watershed assessment shows that large scale mining would destroy our precious salmon streams and other wetlands. This risk is too great for us to accept for our culture and our long term sustainable food source. I ask EPA to quickly take 404c action to protect our salmon and our way of life as well as our land and the future of generations to come. Thank you.

[00:50:48.23]
Norman C Anderson

Thank you. My name is Norman Anderson. I am the youngest son of Norman Anderson of Yakutat (?) and Alma Christenson of Ugashik. My testimony is an objection to the proposed Pebble project and a request that you stick to your timeline. Native Alaskan people have believed in the seven generation scenario as our ancestors have always gingerly taken care of the land to assure that we today can enjoy what they had then. We must take care to ensure that our descendants will have seven generations from now. Over the years I have seen mineral and hydrocarbon corporations abuse the right to explore and destroy our lands. I relate their activity to serial killers who move from one area to another to kill and maim our clans. Bristol Bay is a valued place that we have protected for years, and against mineral and hydrocarbon exploration. There is the potential to make BB a crime scene. If we do not take a stand as caretakers of our land. As a former spokesperson of Northern Dynasty said here at a meeting in this auditorium. If we not only focus on the Pebble project, because Pebble will become the hole in the bagel if the permitting of the Pebble site becomes a reality. The land around us would be staked for potential development and other companies will be approved as well. Since the first native Alaskans claimed Bristol Bay as their home there have been earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricane force winds, blizzards and epidemics. However, since the mineral corporation is allowed to create a future for themselves, we have subsistence lifestyle people who are at an end of our way of life. As much as David slew Goliath with a small stone, Northern Dynasty can cut off Bristol Bay with a project named Pebble. I dedicate my testimony to our (? name) of Newhalen, who once told me don't let them hurt the land. His request hit me like a million porcupine quills. His view was to be heard in any testimony but he asked my generation to protect our traditional habits. I thank EPA for coming to my village and have a safe travel back home.

[00:54:13.05]
Daniel Cheyette

Good evening. My name is Daniel Cheyette and I work for BBNC. I've had the honor and good fortune of working with BBNC's board and shareholders. I've come to greatly appreciate Bristol Bay and its people. The people who live here love this place and its waters. Its resources have supported their families for thousands of years. As you have heard tonight and as you will continue to hear, salmon is the regions greatest resource. Thank you for undertaking the assessment and assembling a better understanding of the watershed and the potential impacts of large scale mining. The assessment is appropriately focused only on large scale mining development. Thank you for not focusing on other infrastructure development that is critical to the regions survival. The assessment is not about roads, the assessment is not about runways and airports. The assessment is not about small property owners. It's not about the Sacketts and the Kegels. The assessment answers the critics who falsely assert that the EPA is targeting all improvements and aims to freeze Bristol Bay in place and time. To the contrary, the assessment is a useful planning tool. It does a great job of identifying the more direct and immediate impacts of large scale mines. By way of improvement, I encourage EPA to add layers to the assessment and look at underlying and indirect impacts that mines would cause to BB families and communities. The socioeconomic impacts to individuals and families, the cultural loss of communities and the additional community needs that large mines would bring. I urge the EPA to finalize the assessment on the existing timeline and start implementing the restrictions and protections that will protect this unique and special place and its salmon resources.

[00:56:25.21]
Dan Barr

Thank you. My name is Dan Barr and I am president of the BB Drift netters Association. I'm **Ex. 6 PII** **Ex. 6 PII** and I've fished almost half my life in the fishery. My family has fished for generations. First of all I would like to request a 120 day extension. Our members have not had an adequate notice even though you have given good notice, it is not adequate and I believe that we need to build on the kind of comments we heard here today. Secondly, I believe the economic impacts can be vastly greater than is portrayed in the report. I read from ocean news and technology from May 2012, the worldwide demand for seafood is expected to more than double in the next

10-15 years. However the amount of seafood being harvested from our oceans is expected to decline due to overfishing. I suggest that in ten years, the value of this fishery could be 600 million and could be potentially \$900 million. Third point is that is captures that mining impacts and disasters are vastly underreported in the mining industry. I give the case of Canada, where the recent Economist says that they are the worst of eight leading countries that only 20% of the potential for transparency is being used, and just in the last two weeks, the salmon farmers attempted to make industry make it illegal to report salmon farm disease with the penalty of \$75000 and two years in jail. I believe that some of this is applicable to the mining industry. A friend of mine said they had some tailings they removed and when it ripped they used acid and four years later distorted salmon came back. Mining can leave a terrible impact in perpetuity. Thanks for your effort to get to the truth and to prevent horror, tragedy and devastation from the residents and visitors to this resource. It is not a matter of if but when if mining is permitted. Thank you.\

[00:58:30.19]
Sharon Wilson

Thank you. My name is Sharon Wilson and I am the regional outreach coordinator for Pebble. I was asked this evening if I would read their statement regarding the assessment. The Pebble Partnership views the watershed assessment as rushed and inadequate. Rushed because EPA has only spent 11 months on preparing the assessment. Rushed because the first meeting was held on this 1,100 page document are being held only two short weeks after the draft of the report was released and rushed because EPA is allowing only 60-days when the people of Alaska are being asked to comment in the middle of summer. The current draft of the assessment is inadequate because EPA spent only 11 months studying and area of 20,000 square miles, while the Pebble Partnership has spent eight years studying approximately 1,500 square miles. Inadequate because the Pebble Partnership study is almost 30,000 pages for this acreage and the EPA study is about 1,100 and inadequate because their environmental studies were gathered and analyzed by scientists on the ground and field research and EPA by their own admission did not spend time analyzing the field data. EPA should return when Alaskans have more time to review the material so that they can meaningfully comment on this assessment. The state of Alaska asked for a 120-day extension on the public comment period. EPA should take the time to do this assessment correctly or stop their work. The current approach is insufficient, inadequate and rushed. Thank you for your time.

[01:00:27.27]

Sara O'Neill

Hi there. My name is Sara O'Neill. I am a freshwater ecologist with 15 years of experience working on the salmon ecosystems. In nearly every place I have worked, salmon populations have been pushed to if not past the brink of extinction. That is until I finally faced the fish of Bristol Bay five years ago. I have worked with tribes and non-profits and fell in love at first sight with the habitats and salmon populations of the Kvichak and Nushagak watersheds. I would like to commend the EPA for the thorough work you have put into the assessment and to highlight your conclusions regarding the global significance of not only of the sockeye salmon population, but also the Nushagak king salmon, which you documented can be the largest king run in the world in many years. This makes the area particularly important to conserve and to study further since king salmon populations are declining throughout the North Pacific Ocean in spite of millions of dollars spent on their restoration in the lower 48, and even in places with minimal human development like the Yukon River. Most of the information in the assessment is based on the low resolution national wetlands inventory data, and vastly underestimates the area impacted by mining in a landscape where I personally sank into the saturated tundra up to my thighs more times than I wish to recall. Given their importance to fish and wildlife, more effort is essential to accurately estimate the wetland area in the region. Overall you have done an excellent job, given the information available; to draw sound and well founded conclusions. The Kvichak and Nushagak Rivers indeed support one of the world's largest and last remaining salmon ecosystems and even under ideal albeit unlikely circumstances, mining of this type and size in this hydrologically and biologically complex place, simply cannot take place without impact. I kindly thank you for your work and take the next logical step in prohibiting the discharge of mine waste in this country's and perhaps the world's last intact freshwater salmon habitat.

[01:02:41.23]

Rick Halford

Thank you again. I kind of am amazed at the unity of Bristol Bay and that probably thousands of the most independent people on earth have gone to the EPA, to the federal government to ask for help. The reason is the complete failure of our state to protect this area. The State of AK is acting like a development partner of Pebble. Whether it is temporary water use permits, dumping directly of drilling material into the groundwater, artesian slime running down the hill.

We flew across a well that has been running for three years, since it was photographed by National Geographic in September of 2009. It is still running today and the slick is still going down the hill. It is within a mile of their biggest camp. They fly across it hundreds and hundreds of times and do nothing. And the state does nothing. As a matter of fact, when long term Alaskans, people like Bella Hammond file a lawsuit for simple access for water use permits, the state joined by Pebble argues against it. Now they come to you to ask for a longer comment period. It is hypocritical. It's ridiculous. Your watershed assessment, one area I think can be stronger is that you underestimate the size of potential damage. You are buying the argument that there is no plan. There is a plan, for a water rights application in 2006 where there is approximately 2.5 billion tons. It has to be a plan, or they have to give up their water rights application, because the law requires to have the priority date, you have to have a plan of appropriation of the water. They can't have it both ways. The state can't have it both ways either. Pebble is telling us the lie of the century. It's still a lie, as it was when the Romans told the British almost two thousand years ago.

[01:05:26.02]
Everett Thompson

First of all, thank you for coming out to my community. All my statements are of my own opinion and don't reflect anyone besides myself. I am a tribal member for Naknek, a village council member and a shareholder for APC. (?), BBNC and Levelock Limited. I thank EPA for coming out here. We have asked you to come out here and a lot of people with a passion for common sense. I don't know how they could build a mine out here below sea level and in such a moist area without having terrible effects on our fish. I have ties to the area and I have been a fisherman since I was a little kid. This is my 29th season coming into it. My daughter is 11 years old and it is her third season coming into it. I am looking forward to it. I look forward to working my butt off to make a living for my family and there have been plenty of winters where my only income was salmon. The state seems like they give the EPA a hard time, but the state allocated a million dollars to do this same study a few years back - an independent scientific review. Nothing was done. In the Pebble Partnership, they talk about socio-economics and how we need this mine and we need jobs and we need this and that. But where are we going to be in 100 years when this boom and bust economy has wore itself out and exhausted itself out and our fisheries is to suffer. So I would like you guys to do a 404(c) process and have a sustainable economy in this area like we have had for thousands and thousands of years. Thank you.

[01:07:25.28]
Sharon Thompson

Hi, my name is Sharon Thompson and I live here in Naknek with my husband and two kids. I am very thankful that EPA has conducted the watershed assessment of BB which confirmed that mining at this scale would cause loss of spawning and rearing habitat and would severely impact our fisheries. Even if there weren't any accidents or catastrophic failures, common sense and now science tells us that development and operation of a mine this big would affect our fish populations and water quality. I am worried that even their exploratory drilling over the last few years has degraded water quality. We drink from a well at our house, and the kids enjoy clean safe water from the ground. I don't believe that Pebble can guarantee that acid, metal and other contaminants won't be released upstream from us over the life span of that mine. They might not even be able to detect that, which puts us all at risk. Digging up miles of land and streams and taking tons of water from the area results in loss of critical habitat for fish. Not to mention other wildlife that we all depend on. It is arrogant for Pebble officials to claim that they can control the flow of water or know of the intricate pathway of its flow underground. It is also ridiculous for them to claim that they can recreate salmon streams after they are destroyed. We need clean safe water just as much as the fish do to survive. We survive here only because of the fish. My husband supports our family through commercial fishing, and we also depend on subsistence fishing and eat salmon year round. Any threat to the health of our fish or the reputation of this fishery would be disastrous for our lives and economy here. The statue of liberty is made up of copper with an iron and steel skeleton. When it was first completed in 1886 it was shiny and new like a copper penny. After 30 years it was exposed to the elements, it was oxidized and turned green and faded over time. I would rather see the statue of liberty be recycled for its copper than see the Pebble extract low grade mineral deposit here in BB because our thriving fishery is just as much a symbol of our liberty, giving us freedom to enjoy clean water, a good environment and the subsist off the land. It is equally important that we defend our national treasure. The last and greatest salmon fishery.

[01:09:46.05]
Lindsey Bloom

Good evening. My name is Lindsey Bloom and I am a lifelong Alaskan and a long time BB commercial fisherman. I want to thank the EPA for coming to BB and taking the time to be here

and listen to our comments. I'm really humbled by the people who have spoken before me and it's hard to find words to import what has already been expressed about the value of our clean water and wild fisheries of this region up here in Alaska. You asked originally for the conclusions that we could draw from the watershed assessment and I think that there is no conclusion to be drawn, except that your agency has a duty to move forward and protect the BB watershed. The original ask, and I thank the tribes who asked you to get involved, they asked you to use the 404(c) action to protect our watershed and if nothing else, if I can leave one thing with you tonight, it's that you absolutely must do it, and you must do it now. We have been held hostage by years of Pebble Partnership propaganda and spending money to try and buy the vote of the Alaskans. They don't have it, they won't have it and we need your help.

[01:11:07.09]
Melanie Brown

Hi, my name is Melanie Brown. I'm a member of the Naknek Native Village Council and a BBNC shareholder. I'm also a permit holder in BB, I set net here in the Naknek district on the site that my great grandfather Paul Shukan established generations ago. I have two children, and my oldest daughter is getting ready to enter the fishery. She is very eager and that makes me very proud. My parents are both permit holders in the bay and I have a niece who is a permit holder as well and a brother-in-law. As you can see, the commercial fishery in BB, it is economic support to my family. But more importantly, the salmon, they have provided countless meals over the years. The salmon have been at the center of our table for generations. The salmon have indirectly fed the mammals that are also part of our meals throughout the winter. I am not a scientist, but I strongly believe that large scale mining development would greatly impact the fishery. I'm really grateful for the work that the EPA is doing, and from what I was able to glean from the watershed assessment, I feel that it really supported what I already believed. I understand that you have the power to prohibit mining waste from basically being dumped into the rearing habitat of our salmon under the clean water act section 404 and I would ask that you use that authority to prohibit mining waste from being deposited into the waterways of the Bristol Bay watershed. Thank you for being here, I really appreciate the work that you are doing and thanks for your time.

[01:13:45.29]
Olaf Hansen

Hello, my name is Olaf Hanson. I am a Naknek resident, a third generation BB commercial fisherman. It is very important to me. I take my family up to the Kvichak every year, and I would like to keep doing that. My son, second youngest wants to fish. My older son has fished. The fishing community we need to protect this and 404(c) should be a must, it shouldn't be a maybe. You guys need to help us and we need help now, because right now we are in desperate measures for what is going to happen here, and you guys have the authority to step up and help us out. We have grandkids, we have grandparents, and we have moms, dads, uncles, aunts that live in this community. They eat the fish, they pick the berries, they eat the berries, and they take pictures. You eat moose, you eat caribou, this is very very important to our community. I am a subsistence user myself and you guys to help us out would be appreciated. We are asking as one voice, even though there are a lot of us in here, we are one voice. We are asking you to step up and put the 404(c) into action and get this ball rolling so that we can carry on. I would hate to not be able to go and do what I do for my lifestyle here.

[01:15:13.07]

Ron Nebert

I'm Ron Nebert and I'm with Ocean Beauty Seafood's. We are a local seafood processor. I would like to say that Ocean Beauty opposes the Pebble Mine project. We feel like that it will greatly endangered seafood jobs and salmon invested throughout BB.

[01:15:49.21]

Jodie McDonnell

My name is Jodie McDonnell. Thank you so much for coming to Bristol Bay to hear the people of our region. I have been a resident of Naknek for 16 years, and my husband for 32 year. I originally came to Naknek working for a seafood buyer. I fell in love with this region and specifically this fishery, eventually becoming commercial fisherman for two seasons. I am currently a safety trainer, training commercial fisherman and seafood workers in first aid and marine safety. My husband and I also own a machine shop where we repair propellers and impellers and shafts for the Bristol Bay gillnet fleet and others. We make our living because the BB fishery. We also subsistence fish for salmon each year. Filling our freezer for the winter with salmon and our cupboards with canned and smoked salmon. One of my concerns has to do with the high seismic activity in this area and the creation of tailings ponds behind large earthen dams. The potential for leaching into our watersheds. If you have ever been on the

beach subsistence fishing, or on a gill netter, watching the salmon hit the net, you would understand my love of this fishery. It is like nothing else I have ever seen. I would hate to see something unique go away. I would trade it for anything in the world. I also feel like the comment period of July 23 is sufficient. Thank you for your assessment and please help us protect our resource by using your authority to implement 404(c).

[01:17:38.06]
Joe Klutsch

My name is Joe Klutsch, I have been a 40 year resident of King Salmon/Naknek. My wife and my son have been here. My son graduated from this state. My testimony has been made so much easier because of the heartfelt comments we have heard from the people who have spoken before me. You certainly now are aware of the cultural and environmental implications of this mining project if it were to move forward. You have already heard this, but I am going to say it again. We are talking about the largest scale pit mine in the word with a very low grade of ore. Remediation in perpetuity. It will take as long. We will be long gone. It will take forever to protect the watershed from the byproducts that come from this mine. That is by their own admission. That is unacceptable. There is more here involved than just the salmon fishery with all due respect. It's an entire ecosystem. Its birds, game, plants, its' the cultural dimensions of this that are at stake. I commend EPA for what you have produced to date and I want you to continue on this course. I think everything in regard to this project qualifies for the 404(c). I will be humble enough to quote something that our former governor Jay Hammond said years ago. "As it relates to resource development projects, we have to distinguish between what is reasonable and sustainable and that which is malignant". This project has every earmark of being malignant. I urge you to use 404(c).

[01:19:59.09]
Don Martinson

Hi. My name is Don Martinson. I want to thank the EPA for taking part in this. And I want to thank the BB natives for asking for this to happen. Without the BB natives, we wouldn't be able to proceed in this fashion. They are a gentle people and they are fierce defenders of what they have here. I really appreciate what they are doing. I've fished here for 50 years; this will be my 51st season. It has provided for my family all of these years and I've really enjoyed fishing and it has been a great way of life and I know how all these other people feel about it too. The

watershed that they hope to impact, the Pebble people, will at the very minimum take away stream flow and then in the future it will be the leaching out that will be the killer. It is going to have an immediate impact to take water. It will destroy life. This project has turned all of us into pro-lifers. We are anti-death in this matter and we beg the EPA to do everything in their power to push this as hard as they can. Thank you.

[01:22:16.00]

David Harsila

Good evening. I'm David Harsila. I'm here representing an organization. (Significant microphone feedback). Association of Fisherman known as AIFMA. An association of independent owners and operators who are a significant number of people here in the bay. And I am here representing the fisherman who cannot be here today tonight. We are supportive of the 404(c) process, including the assessment and the comment period ending July 23. So far we have not found any inaccuracies in our review of the documents and did not disagree with the findings. We will continue to review the document and will submit written comment by July 23. We urge the prohibition of hard rock sulfide mining in this region. Thank you.

[01:23:56.21]

Robert Bonammo

Robert Bonammo, I am also a member of AIFMA along with David who just spoke. I am a third generation fisherman in BB. I'm from N. California. I'm fully invested in this fishery as were my grandfather and my father before me. I truly appreciate the EPA's efforts and providing this assessment of mining impacts in the BB watershed. I believe that any and all information concerning the impacts of any mining in such a diverse area such as BB is not only necessary, but imperative to ensure the continuation of its pristine existence and diverse way of life for both man and enough. I thank you again for the attention that you are giving to this proposed onslaught to one of nature's true gifts. Thank you.

[01:25:26.24]

George Wilson Jr.

My name is George Wilson. I appreciate all of you coming here to listen to all of us. I've been a lifelong fisherman. I started when I was eight years old in my Dad's boat. I'm a third generation fisherman and my ancestors in this region go back to recorded time. I feel like I need to speak

on behalf of my ancestors that raised me and my parents that we have to respect this area as planned for the water and the salmon and the birds and the wildlife. Also, for myself now as a commercial fisherman and also for future generations. My kids, I hope that someday they can partake of this great fishery, one of the last great salmon fisheries in the world. It is one of the last ones, and I feel it is very important that you guys take the appropriate action under 404(c). I'm also president of Levelock Natives limited, which strongly opposes the Pebble Mine. I appreciated you guys work on 404(c) and we will continue to do anything we can to help you guys along in this regard. I would tell the state that all my adult life I've been able to work out here in this region from fishing in the summer to jobs during the winter. There have always been jobs for the people who want to work. Even when we were not actually employed, we have been able to live off of the salmon and the wildlife.

[01:27:33.16]
Harlan Bailey

My name is Harlan Bailey. The Sacramento River in northern California is my native river. It was once home 100 years ago to one of the great salmon runs of the western Pacific. Due to long term long term environmental changes, these fish and the people who it supported are all but gone. I fished here in BB for 41 years now. My son and daughter fish here. We have a home here. We pay taxes here. We buy goods and services here. We appreciate your work here and we thank you for being here. As far as we are concerned, the part of our federal taxes that is going to EPA is money well spent.

[01:28:41.08]
Ricky Cooke

My name is Ricky Cooke. I have fished all the way from New England, I live in Florida and I fish here now. I am President of the (?) Washington Association and the Aquaculture Association in Florida. We fight for water quality constantly. This is the best clean thing I've seen in my whole life. You have created in the past to do this now. Use the history of mining to stop this and save what is here.

[01:29:35.25]
Fred Pike

Good evening and thank you for coming. My name is Fred Pike. I too am with the AIFMA. I'm VP and represent the local fisherman and Alaska fisherman and fisherman throughout the US. I also live here in BB. In Naknek, I've been a resident here for 38 years. Prior to coming to AK, my wife and I grew up in the northern Minnesota iron range. I grew up around open pits and underground mines. I know what damage they can do and what they are doing presently. They have not built a containment pond that does not leach. I will just commend the EPA for their assessment and I urge them to continue forward and move on to the inevitable. Thank you for your time.

[01:31:34.15]
Greg Harris

My name is Greg Harris. I am a 31 year resident and small business owner. I would just like to say that I'm the last person that wants to see EPA here. I am a staunch advocate of this state. I believe in our freedoms and think that many of us came to Alaska for that reason. It seems that our legislature has decided for whatever reason to issue the Pebble Mine that permit. In a lot of ways, I think that EPA has some things that they shouldn't be in and some things they wouldn't do, but I would say this. You guys are doing the right thing, that is investigating and analyzing and evaluating and education and for that I commend you and on this I will stand alongside you. Because the last thing I want to see is this damn mine here. It's a toxic waste spill waiting to happen and people in this room are here for a reason, because they want to continue to come here and see the sustainable and whole fishery. All it takes is about an eighth grade education and sixth grade reading level to do your homework to realize that this mine at this location is bad news. I believe in timber, mining, but this mine and this place is wrong. Thank you very much.

[01:33:34.22]
Matthew Johnson

I want to thank the EPA for coming here and opposing the Pebble Mine. My family has been fishing here since 1960 and it is amazing opportunity for a young guy like myself to experience a fishery that has this much life and prosperity. My entire family has been coming up here for years, and it's been amazing the opportunity that I've personally had because of this. I want my children to be able to know this and I definitely don't want the Pebble Mine to destroy this unbelievably beautiful and natural environment. Thank you very much for coming.

[01:34:33.07]
Larry Vanderlin

I have presently been in Alaska and lived and fished here for about 40 years. Altogether, with my kids our family has been fishing Bristol Bay for 87 years if you add it all up. We are fishing for tuition. My daughter now has a boat as well and I look forward to that. (hard to hear preface). As the earlier gentleman from Sacramento, I live between the Rogue and the Klamath Rivers. Those are nice rivers, but severely degraded, and they will never recover in spite of millions of dollars that have been thrown at recovery of the salmon that once resided there. They are always imperiled. We understand full well what damages are, what Pebble is proposing here is larger than anything that we know of. The salmon are very robust, but they are from a fragile environment. There are many aspects to their multifaceted environment that can throw a wrench into their whole survival. It is very very important that we treat any development, and analyze anything that we do here and be very careful. I would like you thank you for coming here. It is a good thing that has happened on this subject, the specter of Pebble is awful. Thank you very much.

[01:36:54.23]
Chris White

Thanks for coming. I'm Chris White. I've fished here with my family and kids for about 35 years. It is an experience that has been a wonderful, wonderful ride. I hope that 100 years from now in June, when my, and all of our future generations show up here, that they are not living under a giant hammer of toxic ponds upriver from us. Waiting for them to fall and ruin all we have. What you found in this assessment is a treasure, a national treasure on par with the Grand Canyon, but it is even bigger than that. Because of its uniqueness it's a planetary treasure and if we allow something this wild and this big and this rare to be threatened by something as potentially devastating as this mine, I totally believe that we have lost our way to the kingdom of heaven.

[01:38:18.18]
Nancy Morris Lyon

Hi. My name is Nancy Morris Lyon and I too thank you for coming here. I am the owner and operator of (?) Alaska Sportsman Fishing Lodge, which is a sport fishing operation up here on

the Naknek River. I have people who come from all around the world who come to my lodge to enjoy the wonders of Bristol Bay. People from around the world enjoy eating the fish of BB; they are truly the heartbeat of our area. This is America's last wild, strong native salmon stock. In the local economies in this entire area are built around the salmon stock of BB. As your study has concluded, the potential dangers from an open pit mine being developed in this area can be extremely lethal to these salmon resources. I believe the benefits are nowhere near the risks that the mine offers. I do not believe this mine is worth the risk, and I hope in my heart of hearts that you invoke your 404(c) authority and make sure that this mine does not take place or operate so that the salmon and the heart beat of this area can remain for many more generations. Thank you for coming and thank you for your study.

[01:39:49.21]
Richard Wilson

Thank you. Richard Wilson. I've been fishing here in Bristol Bay for several generations. (poor audio quality). I'm here on behalf of several of the elders taking on a different angle here that we have heard. A lot of great conversation here and a lot of great values we are hearing. I sit on a federal RAC board here in the area for our region. I'm also a member of villages. Some of the struggles that we have had lately sitting down with federal agencies is that things always seem to be rushed. I totally agree that we want fish forever, but you talked about a need to hear from our tribal entities and from elders. The elders have been telling me they haven't really had a chance to sit down and talk about it yet. I think that out of respect for the elders and the indigenous people here and the land holders, that just for that reason alone we should be able to go over some of this stuff so that we could make great decisions. They feel like they are being pressured. Knowing that I have been involved with federal subsistence stuff here for three or four years, and the wheels turn so slow on the federal side of things, and to have the opportunity to get the elders together, realize that you have a deadline of July, but you also have the ability to revoke anything that comes your way, so it's not like you have the ability to do it. I ask you give us time so that our tribes and our elders can mull this over and make responsible decisions.

[01:42:41.14]
Captain Charley Gordon

I want to thank EPA for being here. I've been a commercial fisherman here in Alaska for the past 41 years. I also have a degree from the Univ. of Washington in Fishery Biology. This certainly is the most pristine habitat on earth. This fishery supports a variety of lifestyles. My particular one is direct marketing of BB wild salmon. The perception of my customers, primarily natural foods stores and restaurants, food coops and their customers perceive the fish that come out of this area to be absolutely the highest in the world for salmon. There is a growing demand for wild salmon. The reasons are obvious. Nutritional. If the perception, such as in the case of the Exxon Valdez, comes that the fish are tainted, then damage is done. A mining operation of this level would give that perception, even if the slightest. EPA's own admission that even if no failure should occur there will be an impact on the river averse to the habitat and there go the fish. So there are most of my concerns. The other thing is that even if a small mine or a scaled down version of the Pebble Mine were allowed to go in the area. Other mines would go in the area and eventually you will have a much larger footprint. Overall of several mines. I am concerned about this fact as well. We have all seen across the country where local water quality has been affected by companies with good intentions or big mines in other states. That is documented, so there is no reason to ... (inaudible).

[01:45:48.12]

Anishia Elbie

Thank you on behalf of Naknek and Bristol Bay. My name is Anishia Elbie, my parents are Trefon Angason, Sr. and (inaudible) of Ugashik. I am a 62 year resident of S Naknek. I have been a commercial fisherman for 40 years. Since I do not fully understand how the EPA system works, I have a worry. First, do comments made in person carry a bigger impact than those that are written? Are comments made with passion and strong emotion weighed heavier than those comments made in a concise and succinct manner have an impact on the conclusions? Second, are comments made during this comment period going to be tabulated into pro mining and anti mining columns, with the winning columns swaying EPA decision? There are many of us who don't want to get mired in the highly polarized pro or anti mining camp, so I hope not. I haven't read through the assessment yet, so I don't know if the science is credible or complete. However, from what I have seen in your summary, my comments are this. First, in the assessment you interview 53 elders and it looks like the data on subsistence indigenous culture and impact are region wide. Shouldn't your (inaudible). Who determined the list of 53 elders? How did your questions be determined? If you want these elders testimony included to help you make a decision, then why was there only one indigenous culture expert on your scientific peer

review panel? Second, I don't believe the comment period for this assessment and the comment period for the questions for the independent scientific peer review panel are long enough. To make informed comments, both need to be longer. Please grant an extension for both periods. Thank you for coming to Bristol Bay.

[01:48:35.07]

Tim Cook

My name is Tim Cook. I'm proud to say that I'm a commercial fisherman. I'm also an attorney. I was the former Director for Fisheries and the Environment for Gov. Hickel in Washington, DC. I am opposed to the Pebble Mine. The impact of the mine is not just on commercial fisheries, but it is also on subsistence lifestyle, and it is also on the culture of the area. I think the EPA has a duty to protect all of those. This area sits in one of the most geologically active zones anywhere in North America. The impact of a sizeable earthquake is unknown, especially when you take into consideration what happened to Japan. The best laid plans were washed away. As Sergie said, this fishery has been going along for 6,000 years. Your study says forever. Forever is a lot longer than 600 years. Thank you.

[01:50:10.14]

Mark Connor

Hello. I'm Mark Connor. I'm a fisherman. My understanding is that this mine will require hundreds of millions of gallons of water to transport some 200 billion tons of crushed ore 87 miles to the coast. Further, the mine will require hundreds of millions of gallons of water from the water table for settling ponds for these mines. I just want to state that I'm not sure if we know what our water tables are here and what they will be 25 years from now. This last summer I attended a lecture in King Salmon. A man came here to examine the glaciers of BB, specifically in Katmai NP. He was looking for - he was an archaeologist - and he was looking for evidence of man 3,000 years old. That has just now melted out of snowfields. He found artifacts in the Wrangell Mountains that had just melted out of the snowfield last season. The summer before last. These were 3000 year old artifacts made out of wood, and feathers that hadn't been exposed. Our climate is changing and the water table is changing also, so what we change our predictions on today may not be true 25 years from now. You can go to the historical society here in Naknek and look at the photographs of the old school house looking towards the mountains. You can see that there are no alder trees growing. One indication of

melting permafrost level are the growing of the alders. As the permafrost melts they can put their roots down and they can grow. You can take a satellite photograph and you can see that the tundra lakes are shrinking because the subsurface layer of permafrost is melting. That is happening right now. You can go out and you can no longer see from the old school house to the mountains. It has grown up with alders. Things are variable and changing in nature and I don't think we can afford to risk giving hundreds of millions of gallons to a mine at this point.

[01:53:06.16]
Dylan Braund

Good evening. My name is Dylan Braund. I have two young boys who are commercial fisherman and I am a long time Alaska commercial fisherman. I hold a law degree and a master of science in environmental studies. No mine has ever been turned away by the state of Alaska. I have personally reviewed about 67 permits that the Pebble Partnership will need for this project to proceed. I encourage you to use your preemptive veto to exercise your 404(c) authority. There is nothing in the permitting regime that would preclude development of this project. Thank you for undertaking this watershed assessment. Thank you for taking the harness? of this issue (poor audio quality). One aspect of this issue that gets overlooked is the temporal aspect of this issue. Mainly, how this issue will impact future generations. This is the standard that all decisions should be based on. They should see not how decisions will affect us, but how it will affect future generations who have no voice in the process. You alone have the opportunity to stand up for future generations and exercise your 404(c) authority. Make a decision grounded in scientific fact and law. I have read the Clean Water Act in its entirety. In my view, the protection of the most globally significant sockeye salmon resource on the planet is exactly the purpose for which 404(c) was drafted. I have a paper I wrote that I am going to leave with you. It's a review of 14 inches of literature relevant to the Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay. In my remaining time, I want to make a few remarks about the watershed assessment. The subject of impacts of copper on the salmon are well documented, include, but are not limited to the seminal effects on salmon, liver damage, retarded growth among others. Additionally, existing water quality standards for the state of Alaska are not sufficiently protective of salmon function. Therefore, the mine could meet water quality standards and still have a detrimental effect on the fishery.

[01:55:59.23]
Gary Cline

Hello. My name is Gary Cline. I am a Bristol Bay resident, commercial fisherman and a subsistence harvester. I want to thank you for coming out here to hear from the local fisherman and cannery issues, but most of all for conducting this assessment. I think it is a crucial for all of us to understand the importance of our watershed, how it functions and the impact large scale mining will have on our fishery and ecosystem; from the surface waters and the subsurface waters which are critical to our salmon spawners. I'm particularly worried about the 87 miles of spawning streams and gravels will disappear. This is unacceptable. In particular, I'm worried about Chinook and Coho that reside in the Koktuli River, which branches off the Mulchatna and Nushagak. My family ranges from Togiak to Aleknagik to New Stuyahok and every time I travel the Nushagak to see my relatives we go up the Mulchatna. I am also concerned about the caribou, something that is often disregarded when speaking about this issue. I see the people on the Yukon River who are regulated on how much salmon they can put up. For me I feel blessed to be in Bristol Bay and we have so much salmon that we don't live like that. According to your assessment 40% of salmon in the western region are depleted due to human induced pollution. I don't want to see that or experience that here. We are lucky that this resource feeds thousands of families and generates 400 or 500 million a year to the economy. This will result in more jobs according to your assessment that the mine would create if Pebble is development. I cannot think of a more appropriate reason to initiate the 404(c). I urge you to do so and please don't extend the comment period. I think we have enough time to review and comment on the document.

[01:58:48.22]
Ralph Zimin

My name is Ralph Zimin and I am a third generation fisherman here. Thank for being here. I'd like to make just a couple quick factual things pertaining to the watershed assessment proposals. Some of the items that pertain to us and fishing for example, years ago there was a project (inaudible) check, it was quite some years ago, both of these documents talked about effects, engineers, experts etc. In the early 2000's, the cost was estimated of 160 to 180 million dollars to process the two fish from moving and also separating the two stocks. If memory serves me correctly, it was one group had 50,000 spawners and the other group had 250,000, maybe 200,000. Of course, here in BB we have a lot more. The section that almost everyone is familiar with here in Alaska is Exxon Valdez. Again, the experts all put their minds together and said this was a safe thing. We all know what a disaster that ended up being. I am not into

growing government, but I wonder if for example, if there was a second person at the helm to provide oversight and prevent that, it might have been cheaper than the billions spent. The third point in the same category (inaudible) - a truck got stuck under an overpass and why they were trying to deliberate how to solve this problem, a boy comes along on a bicycle and says let the air out of the tires. Problem solved. Thank you.

[02:01:22.04]
Bonnie Gestring

Thank you for completing the Bristol Bay watershed assessment. It clearly highlights the severe and lasting consequences to mine the Pebble project. I am particularly concerned about the likelihood that the mine waste that is generated will become a severe and lasting source of acid mine drainage to the rivers and streams below the mine. I look at acid mine drainage as opening Pandora's Box, because there is no fix to acid mine drainage it becomes a matter of trying to manage it. The assessment estimates the waste rock pile alone could generate up to 2.8 million gallons of contaminated seepage every year and estimates the copper concentration in the seepage to be so high that the entire flow of Upper Talarik Creek could fail to meet water quality standards. It could contaminate the entire creek and potentially even Iliamna Lake could become toxic to fish. There has been talk about the quarry and the acid generating waste rock underwater in the tailing pond open pit after the mine is closed. I want to emphasize that it is not a fix. Keeping the waste rock underwater while it slows the process, does not stop acid generation. The experience of operating mines, particularly those that are comparable to Pebble, there is ample documentation that industry to indicate that all tailings ponds leak over time. So I think it's very clear the choice between a sustainable fishery that continue in perpetuity, or the horrible pollution that would come with the mine. I think there is a compelling case for a 404(c). Thank you.

[02:03:52.26]
Eric Marble

Hello. I come to you guys to ask for help. I am a third generation fisherman, currently attending Arizona State University. If I was not a fisher I would not be going to college. This is also true for my crew members and a lot of the other kids I go to school with. To attend college and come out loan free is unheard of these days. I want to continue to fish and I want my kids to fish. My little brother, he is **Ex. 6 PII** came up for the first time last year. I assume he will

want to continue in my footsteps and follow my dad and grandfathers footsteps. I understand that you guys have the ability to fight Pebble and if I did, I would, but I don't have \$2 million to hire lawyers and stand up and go to bat against them. I hope that you will take the ability that you have and use it. Thank you.

[02:05:15.12]
Sue Flensburg

Thank you. These are my notes. I am originally from New York, but I have lived in Dillingham since 1978. I commercial fished, I was a crew member for my husband for 18 years, so I know what it was like to experience the adrenalin, I know what it was like to fall overboard and get rescued, but my daughter is the director of the Bristol Bay coastal management program. Back in the 80's we originally did a recreation management plan for the Nushagak River and Mulchatna Basin. Shortly thereafter, they started putting up information on the exploration of Pebble and things started to escalate. Both Lake and Peninsula Borough and the coastal management program we did a draft proposal to the state to develop a special area management plan. It is one of the things they are (inaudible). The response from the state is that the two were not connected. So consequently, the opportunity to do that kind of planning did not happen. In my current capacity, and I should emphasize that I am speaking as an individual here, but my current capacity is helping generate dollars for sport fishing for reservations such as (inaudible). One of the things that the state of Alaska should be doing. Unfortunately it is very costly to do these things for reservations. To wrap this up, the state has a huge role in this. It is concerning the coastal management has disappeared; there is very little state support for reservation and tour base. Thank you for mentioning this.

[02:07:54.08]

Note:

This transcript was prepared by Judy Smith, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator from audio recordings taken at the EPA public meeting held in Naknek, Alaska beginning at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 6, 2012. Every effort was made to transcribe the testimony accurately, but there may be errors or omissions because of background noise during the meeting or the sound quality of the recording.